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SUBJECT: EASTERN DRC NOTES - FEBRUARY 20

REF: KINSHASA 164

¶11. (U) The items contained in this report consist principally of spot information from various sources. This report is not exhaustive, nor can all the information contained therein be confirmed at this time.

FDLR Operations

¶12. (SBU) Goma PolOff and post have received information from separate sources confirming that there will be a ceremony on February 25 in Goma to commemorate the RDF withdrawal from the DRC.

¶13. (SBU) MONUC Kinshasa noted that, if the RDF withdraws from the DRC by the end of February, it is highly unlikely that the joint operations will extend into South Kivu. MONUC continues to stress to the FARDC to prepare for post-military operation planning, but MONUC is concerned that the FARDC has no real post-RDF plan.

¶14. (SBU) According to MONUC Kinshasa, the individual, serving as a liaison to FDLR-RUD who was killed February 18 (reftel), was a member of the Church of Christ in Congo (ECC). Our contact said that RUD elements might have killed the go-between in an attempt to dissuade repatriation efforts with RUD combatants.

Integration Issues

¶15. (SBU) MONUC Kinshasa noted that the problem of non-payment of salary for FARDC soldiers could seriously complicate integration efforts. The issue is symptomatic of larger DRC corruption and salary disbursement problems. Therefore, our MONUC contact cautioned that any solution, which might focus exclusively on compensating newly integrated CNDP forces, would undoubtedly create tensions with mainstream FARDC soldiers.

Political Developments

¶16. (SBU) MONUC Kinshasa commented that former RDC-Goma North Kivu Governor Eugene Serufuli has recently visited the East, promoting the concept of "la Rwandaphonie" (i.e. traditional Tutsi and Hutu domination of the Petit Nord). Our MONUC contact suggested there could be a constitutionally legitimate mechanism, within the framework of the DRC's decentralization process, to achieve a division of the Grand Nord and Petit Nord, a concept some have advocated. (Note: As post understands, the DRC's plans to expand from 11 provinces to 26 under decentralization do not include a break-up of North Kivu. End Note.)

¶17. (SBU) MONUC Kinshasa opined that the recent changes in the North Kivu provincial government, including the inclusion of CNDP figures, was most likely planned (probably with Bosco's consent) well in

advance. According to our MONUC contact, the recent changes in the North Kivu cabinet did not alter its ethnic balance, but the CNDP did obtain key posts-justice and human rights.

¶18. (SBU) MONUC reported that Raymond Tshibanda, Minister of International and Regional Cooperation and newly named CNDP head, Desire Kamanzi, are holding talks February 20 in Goma. MONUC is not participating.

Operation Lightning Thunder

¶19. (SBU) MONUC Kinshasa characterized reports of UPDF success against the LRA as overly optimistic. A senior MONUC Political Officer suggested to us that the LRA would persist indefinitely unless LRA leader Kony is killed.

¶10. (SBU) MONUC Force Command reported that there are 4,000 FARDC troops in Haut Ulele in support of Operation Lightning Thunder. MONUC estimated that the LRA now consists of 50-200 rebels, dispersed into 6-7 groups.

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